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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/658,477

09/09/2003

Kenji Hirooka

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05/25/2006

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EXAMINER

JAWORSKI, FRANCIS J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3768

DATE MAILED: 05/25/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/658,477

Applicant(s)

HIROOKA ET AL.

Examiner

Jaworski Francis J.

Art Unit

3768

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 9/9/03 (IDS).
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 33 - 35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 33 - 35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/9/03
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 35 is objected to because of the following informalities: In line 3, "filed" should be -- field --.. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 33 – 35 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims variously of U.S. Patent No. 6,398,721, alone or further in view of claims variously of US Patent No. 6661571.. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because in the case of the '721 patent and with respect to claim 33 content

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the insertion connection of an ultrasound probe system into the surgical microscope portion is variously claimed, a surgical microscope being understood to include an eyepiece as part and parcel of the definition of a microscope and with respect to remaining claims at least the connector would act as a 'holder' out of the field of view of the surgical microscope portion. In the alternative, since in the latter patent the feature of surgical microscopic and ultrasonic or second observation systems are claimed together and resulting in superposition of the images, whereupon it would have additionally been obvious to co-locate the aforesaid connections since the superposed images are to be locally viewed at the microscope.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 33 – 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The language “ on a wall near an eyepiece unit “ is vague with respect to recitation of an attachment connection of the ultrasonic probe to the side or other wall portion of the microscope eyepiece housing since it may pertain to any nearby wall on any console or panel or the wall of a room or even of a nearby room.

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The terminology "electric probe joint" in apparently referring to the corresponding mating portion of a connector to the connector of the ultrasonic probe is also vague and indefinite, since such a connector and its mate taken together constitute such an electrical connection or joint in common parlance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over applicants' prior art para [0006 – 0011] specification admissions, further in view of Koivukangas(US5413573), further in view of Blewett et al(US6106521) .

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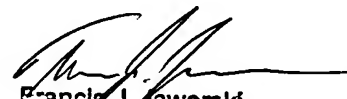
Applicants' admissions considered compositely render obvious the use of endoscopic and ultrasonic observation probe devices together in conjunction with microscopy in order to support surgical procedures, albeit the specification is silent as to any known prior art common connection to a 'wall' near an eyepiece unit. However Koivukangas col. 3 lines 25 – 31 makes clear that electrical joint connection is advantageous if occurring to a structure associated with the support gantry of the surgical system, and in the case of Blewett et al, the probe (therein an RF of HIFU ultrasound probe) is advantageously located in the endoscope channel so as to co-locate the endoscope and inner probe to a common location, whereupon the egress point of the additional instrument is necessarily in the endoscope wall near the viewing piece, see Fig. 7 thereof.

Claims 34 – 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the reference combination as applied to claim 33 above, and further in view of Deitrich et al (US5505203). Whereas the former are silent as to location of a holder for physically holding such a probe, it would have been obvious in view of the latter, Fig. 2 to locate both a probe holder and electrical connection on wall portions of an adjacent console where they are out of the field of view of the ultrasound probe when it is actively imaging.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Jaworski Francis J. at telephone number 571-272-4738.

FJJ:fjj

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Francis J. Jaworski
Primary Examiner